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RSD Contact:

Cay Kimbrell, Chief of Staff for External Affairs
504.373-6200 ext. 22140 (o)
504.810-8460 (c)
Cay.Kimbrell@rsdla.net
<http://www.rsdla.net>

OPSB Contact:

Kathleen Padian, Deputy Superintendent
504.359-8195 (o)
504.919-7633 (c)
Kathleen_padian@opsb.us
<http://www.opsb.us>

Orleans Parish School Board and Recovery School District Collaborate to Expand Access to High Quality Programs and Facilities for All Students

March 18, 2014, New Orleans, LA –In an effort to continue the momentum that has led to remarkable growth in academic achievement for students across the city, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) and the Recovery School District (RSD), announce today a cooperative endeavor agreement to ensure increased funding for programs targeted to high needs students, including students with disabilities, students chronically absent from school, and students transitioning from secure and non-secure custody who are particularly at-risk of dropping out of school, and expanded access to high quality facilities.

“This agreement further builds upon our commitment to transforming public schools in New Orleans by ensuring equity for all students, particularly students with the highest needs. The success of all students in New Orleans is paramount to our mission,” said Recovery School District Superintendent Patrick Dobard.

Since Hurricane Katrina, OPSB and RSD have transformed public schools in New Orleans, leading the state in increasing academic outcomes for students. The success of this transformation is evident with 67% of students in New Orleans now attending “A”, “B”, or “C” schools – up from 20% in 2005. Furthermore, since 2005, and the destruction of nearly 80% of the public school buildings in Orleans Parish, the Recovery School District and Orleans Parish School Board have worked together to rebuild and renovate public school facilities. The School Facilities Master Plan adopted in 2011 by OPSB and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is the first major facilities plan for Orleans Parish schools since 1952.

“Our goal to provide 21st century facilities and technology to our students is central to our strategic priorities as a local school district,” said Orleans Parish School Board Superintendent Stan Smith. “This



agreement continues to position OPSB and RSD as a world-class system of schools that provide equitable access to diverse, high-quality academic opportunities for all students.”

This agreement strengthens a collaborative working relationship between the OPSB and RSD by clarifying and developing current and new procedures and practices relating to shared responsibilities to provide quality school facilities and citywide educational services to all students in Orleans Parish. Together we will build upon our commitment to transforming public schools in New Orleans into a world class system of schools that prepares all students for college and career.

“I’m excited that we are working collaboratively to address the needs of all students in our city,” said OPSB President Nolan Marshall. “Continuing to improve public education in New Orleans and provide opportunities for students and families is vital to the economic success of our parish.”

Highlights of the cooperative endeavor agreement include:

Programming for Students with Special Needs

- A citywide exceptional needs fund to support schools with the costs of serving students with disabilities with the highest needs.
- Start-up funding and continued commitment for a new therapeutic setting for students in need of intensive mental health support.
- Start-up funding and continued commitment for new and improved services to support students at-risk of dropping out due to truancy, chronic absenteeism, or court involvement.

Expanded Access to 21st Century Facilities

- RSD will complete construction on the new Bradley Elementary School facility, and upon completion, will transfer the building to OPSB.
- Once the Phillips/Waters site is complete, OPSB will transfer control of the current McDonogh 35 (Kerlerec St.) building to RSD for use as swing space for high school students. RSD and OPSB agree to discuss and collaborate on future assignments of public school facilities for the benefit of all public schools in Orleans Parish.
- RSD and OPSB will continue to collaborate to gather and analyze information on student demographic needs and charter school operator capacity to inform decisions for the number and type of schools needed citywide.



Expanded Access to Early Childhood Programs

- OPSB and RSD agree to work together to ensure the continued and expanded provision of educational services to all three- and four-year-old students in Orleans Parish through participating in, and supporting the work of the New Orleans Early Education Network led by Agenda for Children.
- Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, OPSB will expand its current Child Find Office to provide "Child Search" services for the entire city—locating, identifying, and evaluating all pre-school aged children with disabilities citywide. RSD and OPSB will work together to coordinate for the placement of these students in both RSD and OPSB schools and programs to ensure that each child is provided with the educational services he or she needs.

Other Citywide Services

- RSD and OPSB reaffirm their commitment to common, citywide processes that ensure equity for all students, regardless of the school they attend, including: OneApp enrollment process, a citywide Student Hearing Office and common student expulsion policies, federally required services to non-public schools, and supporting the Youth Study Center/Alternative Learning Institute.

"This is the next step in continuing to transform schools in New Orleans," said Adrian Morgan, CEO of Algiers Charter School Association. "With rebuilding school facilities, partnering to address citywide services, and supporting schools with the financial resources to serve all kids, we are leveling the playing field for schools and students."

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